

# **City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes Taken by Judy Nathans for February 10, 2005**

Members: Adam Mitchell, Save that Stuff; Cathy McCormick, Judy Nathans

Guests: Marc Fournier, Haley & Aldrich; Mark Evans, FCR-Boston; Doane Perry, Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association; Randi Mail, Recycling Director

### **Market Update from FCR**

For commodity prices, Mark Evans reported a huge jump in OCC, office paper strong and fairly stable, and plastics "crazy" with stretch film pretty high. Randi asked if FCR would take baled plastic film from the City's Drop-Off Center and he indicated that the bales would need to be the standard 30"x60". Some discussion followed regarding factors driving energy prices higher.

### **City Updates**

#### Recycling Program Manager Position

Randi passed out the Recycling Program Manager job description, which was posted in many places and closed 2/24/05. Rob Gogan, Paul Schlaver, Annette Rodibaugh and Randi comprise the interview evaluation team. Cathy asked if the Committee's letter requesting an additional staff person, helped keep this a full time position. Randi thought it did as the City briefly considered making it part-time.

#### School Recycling

Members agreed that the loss of Rick Leandro, Recycling Program Manager is major, since he drove the recycling program in the schools. Since Rick left in December coordination with the schools is on hold. However, the schools are still faxing their self-reported tonnage worksheet, which are tracked by Juliette, the part-time Recycling Assistant. While Rick was still working, Randi had talked with Jim Maloney, the CFO (?) to review how classroom recycling bins get emptied in each school. The Tobin school provoked this discussion due to its lacking program last year. Jim agreed that where there aren't sustainable procedures in place with teachers and/or students, custodians should and will be responsible to empty classroom bins, especially at the Tobin.

The Committee pointed out that this is a long-standing problem in the schools, one that has been discussed for many years since it is not clear if custodial job descriptions explicitly list recycling responsibilities. Adam mentioned that the Brookline school system has similar problems getting the custodians to do the recycling in each classroom. Mark F. shared his UMASS experience and that a "shift of culture" is needed.

The Committee briefly discussed the loss of financial incentives (\$17/ton) in FY02 to the schools, funded by the MRIP program. Adam said that Brookline's Recycling Contractor might provide funds toward a "recycling champions" scholarship program from a flat fee. He also suggested that Cambridge and Brookline high schools consider a "race to recycle". The Committee was positive to the idea.

### **Random Tidbits**

- Doane asked about recycling plans for the new library, since he saw the park plan and no recycling. Randi said that she would have Jay Astle, Recycling Drop-Off Center Monitor who oversees public area recycling contact Alan Burne, the Project Director for the Main Library expansion project.
- Randi mentioned an article she read about a pilot project in Philadelphia that is bar coding resident's recycling bins. The hauler will weigh the bins and households will earn vouchers from participating local stores as a result of their recycling. A group called the Recycle Bank is creating the database to do this.

#### Recycling Contracts

Committee asked for an update of the recycling bids:

1. Curbside Contract (includes collection of yard waste and public area recycling)
2. Business Contract
3. Hauling of Roll-offs from the Drop-Off Center and Collection of Cardboard Dumpsters at City Buildings and Schools

Randi explained that there are still some outstanding questions on several of the bids. The 5 bidders for the curbside contract, (which includes collection of yard waste and public area recycling) from the low to high bid were: Russell, Waste Management, Casella, JRM, and BFI. It will also go to a 5 year from 4 year contract.

Bidders for the Drop-off contract were Save That Stuff, Russell, Waste Management and Capital (bid late). This contract does not include hauling of the Drop-Off Center roll-off for plastic film, Styrofoam and

unmarked plastics (which is a separate contract with Conigliaro).

Save That Stuff was the only bidder for the business contract. The Committee asked why the business bid only attracted one bidder and Randi suggested that it may be due to the new requirement that the hauler provide technical assistance to its customers, actively market and recruit customers and submit annual progress reports. This was a major contract change in addition to the hauler receiving 100% of the revenues and being responsible for 100% of the processing costs; no need for a dedicated truck and non-profits can subscribe. Currently 132 businesses subscribe to the service of over 6,000 in Cambridge.

Committee discussion shifted to DEP budget cuts and that most of the waste ban enforcers are gone. The DEP has sustained about 25% in job cuts.

#### Bottle Bill

Questions arose of where the additional unredeemed deposit funds would go if the Expanded Bottle Bill is passed this year - the General Fund, since the Clean Environment Fund was eliminated in FY02. Some are concerned that "scavenging" in bins will result in lower recycling tonnage for the city. On the flip side, the capture rates of these materials would rise. The

Committee members then pondered Representative Alice Wolf's support of this bill and asked Randi to contact her office and ask if she can come to our next meeting to explain her position. A special meeting with Representative Wolf has been scheduled for April 26<sup>th</sup> at 8am in the Ackerman Room.

#### 2006 NRC Conference (National Recycling Coalition)

Adam would like the Committee to support bringing the 2006 conference to Boston and suggested that Randi contact Boston's Recycling Coordinator, Susan Cascino for more details.

#### **Subcommittee on Licensing Waste Haulers**

A subcommittee has been established (Rob Gogan, Adam Mitchell, Judy Nathans and Paul Schlaver) to

gather information for the city's License Commission and Public Works Department regarding the possibility to add a licensing regulation that would require all private waste haulers operating in Cambridge to offer recycling services to their customers either directly or through a subcontractor. When requested, haulers would be required to submit a list of their recycling and non-recycling customers to the City. According to Ellen Watson, Executive Assistant at the License Commission, who has attended a few meetings, this would not require a new ordinance, just a rules and regulation promulgation.

This would be similar to guidelines adopted in Northampton, Brookline and Marshfield. Randi suggested that the subcommittee needs more detailed info on case studies, how it works, language, etc. which we will then propose to the Chairman of the License Commission, Richard Scali and Lisa Peterson, DPW Commissioner. Given that there needs to be a public hearing, any changes probably would not be in place until 2006 or 2007.

Discussion ensued regarding where the responsibility of enforcement would lie within the City, dynamics of net/gross leases. Barriers to participation were discussed at length; particularly space and some suggested maybe the City would have an "exemption list". Mark F. suggested we should have a "technical assistance" piece in the licensing information and Randi mentioned that business subscribers to the City contract would be able to access technical assistance. Adam said the "intent" of this language is important since the recycling/trash divisions of the major haulers often disagree.

Judy said she would contact Ellen Watson to get the existing language for haulers to distribute to the subcommittee before we have our own meeting. Adam said he would email the subcommittee members regarding possible time to meet before the next monthly RAC meeting.